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ENVIRONMENT

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ODU, William & Mary seek funds for joint center on sea-level rise

By Dave Mayfield
The Virginian-Pilot
Dec 12, 2015



Old Dominion University and the College of William & Mary have been increasingly collaborating on research revolving around sea-level rise. Now the schools are taking steps to establish a joint center devoted to the issue, officials said last week.

The schools have asked Gov. Terry McAuliffe to include nearly \$1 million for the yet-to-be-named center in his budget to be announced Thursday. The General Assembly's Joint Subcommittee to Study Recurrent Flooding has recommended such a center.

Morris Foster, ODU's vice president of research, said the center tops the university's list of discretionary funding requests — those that are considered important but not essential. William & Mary's Virginia Institute of Marine Science also has put the center atop its wish list.

Regardless of whether it makes this year's budget cut, the schools plan to formalize a joint effort on

sea-level rise issues, said Mark Luckenbach, a VIMS associate dean who oversees research.

Luckenbach credited ODU for being “at the table first,” in pushing a regionwide approach. He said VIMS and a William & Mary Law School offshoot called the Virginia Coastal Policy Center have been deepening their ties with ODU during that process.

The Norfolk university’s Center for Sea Level Rise was chosen by the White House in 2014 for a two-year pilot project to address the threat. Through various forums, ODU has been spearheading a discussion on the issue and how local communities can adapt to rising seas.

Hampton Roads has been identified as among U.S. coastal areas most vulnerable to climate change.

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